

postcloture time on the Power nomination expire at 3:30 p.m. today, and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that following disposition of the nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and vote on the passage of calendar No. 48, S.J. Res. 14, and that if passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at 3:30 p.m., the Senate will vote on confirmation of Samantha Power to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and on passage of the joint resolution of disapproval regarding the methane rule.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA POWER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as I have said many times in the past, Presidents should be given a good deal of discretion when choosing their political appointees, and so long as their nominees are qualified and do not obstruct the advice and consent process, the Senate should not stand in the way of their confirmation.

After all, Presidents are ultimately responsible for the actions of their administration. And if the buck truly stops at the Resolute Desk, they need to be able to trust their subordinates to get the job done.

That being said, I now come to the point of my coming to the floor; that I must vote no on the nomination of Samantha Power to be Director of USAID.

On February 18, I sent a letter to Ms. Power asking questions regarding emails that came out of her office during her time serving as U.N. Ambassador.

Heavily redacted versions of those emails obtained by my office appear to suggest that Ms. Power's staff may have been working behind the scenes to remove the Islamic Relief Agency from the U.S. Treasury Department's sanctions list.

That organization was placed on the sanctions list for what? Funneling money to terrorist groups, and, thus, removing it would allow that organization to receive private donations as well as taxpayer funds.

In her letter responding to my questions, Ms. Power claimed that she was not working to take the Islamic Relief Agency off the sanctions list. She further claimed that the emails in question were part of an effort to challenge false claims made by the Islamic Relief Agency at the U.N. denying their involvement in terrorist financing.

In order to verify her claims, I have requested, on multiple occasions, that she provide unredacted copies of the emails and complete answers to the questions that I posed in my original letter.

But after 3 months, all I have received is a collection of public press releases. I have not received the emails I requested. I have not received answers to my questions.

Normally, political appointees and nominees wait until after they are confirmed to start ignoring congressional inquiries, but in this case, it seems the Executive branch has decided advice and consent is going to be a mere formality, and there is no need to wait. This seems to be a pattern.

For instance, I asked the Secretary of HHS a number of specific questions for the record as part of the Finance Committee vetting process. I received responses that didn't even try to answer the substance of my questions.

I also asked Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to reconcile some conflicting information on her House financial disclosures and responses to questions for the record for the Energy Committee about her taxes. They weren't gotcha questions either. In fact, it was probably innocent mistakes on her part, if anything, but Secretary Haaland declined to respond at all.

Maybe the White House figures simply that they don't need Republican votes so they don't need to answer even routine vetting questions from Republicans, but then the White House can't blame Republicans for voting no on their nominees when they ignore our oversight questions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

S.J. RES. 14

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the methane problem is not a new one. It has quickly and drastically warmed our planet since the Industrial Revolution, and today it accounts for one-quarter of global warming.

We have no time to lose. In the short term, methane is more than 80 times more powerful and damaging than its better known cousin named CO<sub>2</sub>.

And while we have made more progress reducing our carbon dioxide levels, methane pollution has continued to surge in the background. Even last year, with more cars off the road and many stuck in their homes, methane pollution levels just kept rising.

And it rose in record amounts. In 2020, we saw the largest ever annual increase in methane emissions. If we continue to fail to act, methane pollution from the oil and gas industry is projected to cause as much near-term global warming as 260 coal-fired powerplants every year by 2025.

This is a crisis brought on by humanity, but, thankfully, it is one that we can solve as well by humanity. We have the technology and we understand the science and we need now to summon the political will and the regulatory leadership in order to solve this methane problem.

Last week, I sent a letter to President Biden asking him to lead the world in developing a bold domestic methane strategy, and although the

administration's economy-wide goals for greenhouse gas emissions are a good baseline start, we need robust and specific targets for methane.

By voting today to rescind the Trump-era attacks on methane regulations, we can protect the Clean Air Act instead of undermining it. By reinstating strong standards, we can protect public health and create new jobs in detecting and repairing leaks. By taking a stand today for environmental progress and good governance, we can begin to repair the immense damage done by Donald Trump. He was an enemy of science, a roadblock to progress, and a willing saboteur of American jobs and health as long as he could pursue his anti-environmental agenda.

Today, we have an opportunity to recommit to climate action and to environmental justice. The COVID-19 pandemic has helped expose the deep, systemic, and historic injustices our communities of color and low-income neighborhoods continue to face, communities like those in Chelsea, MA, which has been affected by both poor air quality and some of the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the State and the Nation, or Weymouth, MA, which grapples daily with the public health and public safety threat of a natural gas compressor station.

Big oil and big gas corporations have used places like Weymouth as a way station for pollution, without fear of reprisal for emissions of methane and toxic compounds. This week, we can stand up for justice for these communities instead of idly standing by.

By passing this resolution on the floor this afternoon, we can make real progress for the climate, for our global community, and for all Americans who breathe different air because of their race, their ZIP Code, or their income level.

In Massachusetts, Ralph Waldo Emerson said that health is the first wealth. Today's vote is a decisive victory for our families. It will give the Biden administration the tools it needs to shut in this methane for a very inexpensive cost to the oil and gas industry, providing real benefits to the health of our planet and the health of families in our country. As a result, I urge an "aye" vote on that CRA.

#### NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA POWER

Mr. President, I would like to speak on behalf of the nominee of the Biden administration to become the Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development or USAID.

He has a great nominee, Samantha Power, for this job. As noted in a New Yorker profile of her, Samantha's last name, Power, comes from the Irish "de Paor" meaning "of the poor." Fittingly, she has dedicated her entire life in service of others, using her razor-sharp intelligence and fierce advocacy as a journalist, activist, and diplomat to stand with the world's voiceless masses, all while simultaneously advancing U.S. interests by building bonds in every corner of the world.